GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COAL
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4044
ANSWERED ON:17.05.2006
PRIVATE COMPANIES TO EXPLORE AND MINE COAL/LIGNITE
Patel Shri Kishanbhai Vestabhai;Singh Shri Sugrib

Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) Whether the committee of Group of Ministers was set up to facilitate Private companies to explore and mine coal and lignite with the existing restrictions relating to captive mining;

(b) if so, whether the GoM has submitted its report to the Government;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether various trade unions have opposed this step of the Government;

(e) if so, the reasons for their opposition; and

(f) the action taken by the Government to bring about consensus on the issue?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO)

(a) to (f): The Central Government had sought to amend the Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Act, 1973 with a view to allow Indian companies both in the public and private sectors to mine coal in the country without the existing restriction of captive mining and to undertake exploration of coal in the country, in order to bridge the gap between demand and supply of coal. Accordingly, a Bill, namely the Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Amendment Bill, 2000, was introduced in the Rajya Sabha on 24.4.2000. The Rajya Sabha referred the matter to the Standing Committee on Energy for study and its recommendation. The Committee submitted its report. Introduction of the Amendment Bill in Parliament evoked a strong reaction and the Trade Unions threatened to go on strike. A Group of Ministers (GOM) was constituted on 11.12.2000. The terms of reference of GOM included, inter-alia, the demand for withdrawal of pending Bill from Parliament.

A series of meetings were held by GOM as well Ministers in charge of coal Ministry with the trade unions in this connection. The Trade Unions were assured that the Bill would not be moved without taking them into confidence. The GOM could not finalise its recommendations. With the change of Government, the GOM has ceased to exist.